

Message Text

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OMB-01 INRE-00 MC-02 /070 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3794

INFO USSOUTHCOM QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 MANAGUA 3352

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NU

SUBJECT: US SECURITY ASSISTANCE FY 1979 PROGRAM

REF: (A) STATE 133136

SUMMARY: THE GON'S PAST MILITARY EXPENDITURES AND FUTURE NEEDS ARE MODEST AND APPROPRIATE TO MEET THE GON-PERCEIVED THREAT OF EXTERNALLY SUPPORTED REVOLUTIONARY INSURGENCY. NEVERTHELESS, THE US SECURITY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP IS IN A STATE OF FLUX AS A RESULT OF US SUSPENSION OF THE FY 1977 PROGRAM AND ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO SUSPEND THE FY 1978 PROGRAM UNTIL THERE IS A FINDING OF IMPROVEMENT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN QUITE MODEST IN THE PAST EVEN THOUGH THE U.S. HAS BEEN THE PRINCIPLE SOURCE OF SUPPLIES. HOWEVER, THE PROGRAM HAS SIGNIFICANT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT WHICH GIVES THE U.S. LEVERAGE IN PROMOTING GREATER RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. END SUMMARY

1. PROJECTING US SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO FY 1979 IS VERY DIFFICULT INASMUCH AS WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THERE WILL BE ANY 1977 OR 1978 PROGRAM AS A RESULT OF SUSPENSION RESULTING FROM CONCERN OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN NICARAGUA. IN THE ABSENCE OF A PROGRAM IN THESE YEARS GON PURCHASE REQUIREMENTS COULD BE GREATER
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THAN NORMAL IN FY 1979. ALTERNATIVELY, THE GON MIGHT ESTABLISH OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPLY WHICH WOULD DIMINISH ITS REQUIREMENT FOR OR INTEREST

IN PURCHASES FROM U.S. THE PROGRAM SUSPENSION IN 1977 AND 1978 WOULD ALSO LIKELY AFFECT GON PERCEPTION OF INTERNAL THREAT, I.E. THE REVOLUTIONARY GUERRILLA MOVEMENT COULD BE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEMPT A MORE AGGRESSIVE POSTURE VIS-A-VIS THE NATIONAL GUARD (GN) WHILE

THE GON IS OPERATING UNDER THE STIGMA OF U.S. REPROBATION.

2. IN THIS CLIMATE OF UNCERTAINTY, EMB HAS PREPARED RESPONSE TO REQUESTED ASSESSMENT ON ASSUMPTION THERE WILL BE SOME MILITARY ASSISTANCE DELIVERIES IN FY 1977 OR FY 1978 OR BOTH YEARS AS A RESULT OF PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT IN GON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES. RECENT SIGNS OF GON EFFORTS TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS IMAGE JUSTIFY THIS PROJECTION. (SEE MANAGUA 3114, AND 3273).

3. US INTERESTS IN CONTINUED SECURITY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP ARE DETAILED IN PARM (MANAGUA 1506). IN SUMMARY, SECURITY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP IS PART OF FABRIC OF TRADITIONAL COOPERATIVE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP WHICH BENEFITS US IN (A) SUPPORT IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, AND (B) FAVORABLE ECONOMIC AND TRADE CLIMATE. FURTHER, IT GIVES U.S. LEVERAGE TO INFLUENCE GON AND/OR GN INTERNAL POLICIES. A FURTHER RESULT OF THE CONTINUED RELATIONSHIP IS THE AVOIDANCE OF ADDITIONAL COSTS TO THE GON WHICH IT WOULD INCUR IF IT WERE FORCED TO REORIENT ITS MILITARY PROCURMENT TO THIRD COUNTRIES (SEE MANAGUA 2745). A DISLOCATION TOWARD THIRD COUNTRY PROCUREMENT WOULD HAVE NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT ON U.S. ECONOMY BUT COULD CONSISTUTE A SIGNIFICANT DRAIN ON GON RESOURCES OTHERWISE AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS.

4. FOLLOWING RESPONSES RELATE TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN PARA 4 OF REFTTEL:

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A. THE THREAT: PRIMARY THREAT PERCEIVED BY GON AT PRESENT AND IN FUTURE IS INTERNAL SUBVERSION BY REVOLUTIONARY QUERRILLAS. THIS THREAT IS SEEN IN TERMS OF THE SANDINIST NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (FSLN) AND OTHER RELATED REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS HAVING CAPABILITY TO CREATE POLITICAL AND, THEREFORE, ECONOMIC INSTABILITY THROUGH SPORADIC TERRORIST ATTACKS SUCH AS DECEMBER 1974 KIDNAPPING, RANSOM. AND FLIGHT TO CUBA INCIDENT (WHICH LED TO IMPOSITION OF STATE OF SIEGE) OR RECENT AMBUSHES AGAINST GN PATROLS. BECAUSE THE FSLN HAS SUPPORT OF CUBA AS A SAFEHAVEN AND TRAINING CENTER AS WELL AS PROPAGANDA CHANNEL VIA RADIO HAVANA, AND BECAUSE THE FSLN SUPPORT NETWORK EXTENDS ACROSS NEIGHBORING BORDERS INTO COSTA RICA AND HONDURAS, THE GON CONSIDERS INCREASE IN CUBAN SUPPORT FOR FSLN TO BE POSSIBLE. SECONDARY THREATS PERCEIVED BY THE GON WOULD INCLUDE: (1) THE COMING TO POWER IN HONDURAS OF A GOVERNMENT HOSTILE TO NICARAGUA. HONDURAN MILITARY SUPERIORITY AGGRAVATES THE CONCERN WHICH ATTACHES TO THIS EVENTUALITY. HOWEVER, THE GON DOES NOT APPARENTLY RECOGNIZE THIS AS A CURRENT THREAT AND HAS NOT INDICATED ANY ATTEMPT TO TRY TO MODERNIZE AND EXPAND ITS WEAPONRY SUFFICIENTLY TO MATCH HONDURAS' MILITARY ADVANTAGE. (2) A CUBAN ARMED INVASION WAS NOT CONSIDERED A THREAT IN THE PAST BECAUSE OF THE US SECURITY UMBRELLA. HOWEVER, WITH A U.S. DETENTE POLICY TOWARD CUBA, THE LACK OF US. RESPONSE TO CUBAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA,

AND A DISTANCING IN U.S.-NICARAGUAN RELATIONS FOCUSSED LARGELY ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS/MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP, GN LEADERS NO LONGER TAKE FOR GRANTED THE U.S. SECURITY UMBRELLA, NOR WOULD THEY COUNT HEAVILY ON RIO TREATY ASSISTANCE WHICH WAS NOT BACKED BY THE

US. IN LIGHT OF LONG-STANDING NICARAGUAN-CUBAN ANTIPATHIES WHICH ARE FOUNDED IN HISTORICAL GRIEVANCES, THE MOST NOTABLE BEING THE BAG OF PIGS FORCES LAUNCHED FROM NICARAGUA, THIS THREAT MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY RULED OUT BY THE GN. THE RESPONSE: GON RESPONSE TO THE FSLN TERRORIST THREAT HAS BEEN IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW AND AN ACTIVE MILITARY CAMPAIGN TO SEEK OUT AND END OPERATIONS OF THE FSLN

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3795

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 MANAGUA 3352

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR PARA 2 OMISSION IN ORIG. TRANSMISSION

GUERRILLAS AND THEIR CLANDESTINE SUPPORT NETWORK. THE GON HAS HAD SIGNIFICANT SUCCESSES IN THIS CAMPAIGN BUT FSLN RECRUITMENT CONTINUES. BECAUSE OF EXTERNAL PRESSURE, PRIMARILY FROM THE U.S. THE GON PROBABLY WILL LIFT STATE OF SIEGE DESPITE STRONG OPPOSITION WITHIN THE GN. AT THAT TIME THE GON RESPONSE WILL BE FORCED TO CHANGE IN THE HABEAS CORPUS PROVISIONS WILL SPPLY AND CHARGES WILL BE REQUIRED WITHIN AN ESTABLISHED TIME FRAME AND CENSORSHIP WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE TO SUPPRESS ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT OF DETAINEES. THE GON RESPONSE TO SECONDARY THREATS IS PRIMARILY TO FORGE REGIONAL MILITARY TIES THROUGH CONDECA AND DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY TO INHIBIT THE POSSIBILITY OF A HOSTILE NEIGHBOR AND TO PRESENT A GREATER UNITED REGIONAL FRONT AGAINST ANY POSSIBLE THREAT FROM CUBA.

EMBASSY ASSESSMENT: EMB BELIEVES THE GON PERCEPTION OF THREAT IS REALISTIC WITH THE EXCEPTION OF POSSIBLE DIRECT MILITARY ACTIVITY BY CUBA IN NICARAGUA. THE DIFFERENCE IS EMB ASSUMPTION THE U.S.

WOULD NOT REMAIN NEUTRAL IN THE EVENTUALITY OF DIRECT CUBAN AGGRESSION IN THIS HEMISPHERE. WITH REGARD TO THE GON RESPONSE TO THE THREAT IT PERCEIVES FROM THE FSLN GUERRILLAS, EMB BELIEVES THE GON RESPONSE HAS BEEN DISPROPORTIONATE AND THAT EXCESSES COMMITTED DURING THE STAGE OF SIEGE, EITHER SERIOUS SUCH AS ALLEGED KILLINGS OR MINOR

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SUCH AS ROUGH HANDLING OF DETAINEES, HAVE PROMOTED SOME LIMITED SUPPORT FOR THE FSL. EMB BELIEVES THE MOST EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE THREAT POSED BY THE DEDICATED MARXIST-LENINIST LEADERSHIP OF THE FSLN IS ENLIGHTENED, RESPONSIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WHICH ATTACKS THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS PRESENTLY CAUSING NON-IDEOLOGUES TOO LOOK OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT FOR CHANGE. THERE ARE PRESENTLY VARIOUS PROGRAMS OF THE GON DIRECTED TOWARD IMPROVING SOCIAL CONDITIONS. THE GON'S MAJOR DEFICIENCY IS IN ITS SOMETIMES UNRESPONSIVE AND SOMETIMES NEGATIVE REACTION TO PRESSURES FOR CHANGE. ITS BASIC UNRESPONSIVENESS HAS DEEP HISTORICAL ROOTS AND IS NOT SUBJECT TO SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATION EXCEPT AS THERE IS MAJOR CULTURAL-SOCIETAL-PERCEPTURAL CHANGE WITHIN THE BODY POLITIC.

B. THESE QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED ABOVE.

C. THE GN MILITARY STRUCTURE IS UNIFIED IN A SINGLE SERVICE WHICH ENCOMPASSES THE ARMY, AIR FORCE AND HAVE AS WELL AS POLICE, IMMIGRATION, NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT, ETC. DEPARTMENTAL COMPANY COMMANDERS REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE CHIEF OF THE GN (I.E, PRESIDENT SOMOZA). AN ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE SUCH AS A BATTALION ORGANIZATION OR SEPARATION INTO AUTONOMOUS BRANCHES WOULD BE MORE COSTLY AND MAKE LITTLE SENSE IN A COUNTRY THE SIZE OF NICARAGUA. THE GON BELIEVES THIS FORCE STRUCTURE IS IN KEEPING WITH NICARAGUAN NEEDS. ITS LIMITED REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTERNAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE ARE SUCH THAT US SUPPORT CAN BE APPROPRIATELY MATCHED TO OUR LIMITED INTERESTS.

D. THE GON MAY BE EXPECTED TO BE INTERESTED IN PROCURING REPLACEMENT SMALL ARMS, AMMUNITION FOR NEW AND CURRENT WEAPONS (INCLUDING M-16), SPARE PARTS AND RATIONS, HEAVY ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT, GENERAL PURPOSE MILITARY VEHICLES, RADAR AND NAVAL PATROL CRAFT. THESE WOULD BE USED FOR GENERAL MILITARY PREPAREDNESS AS WELL AS MAINTAINING INTERNAL ORDER. THE ONLY U.S. INTEREST SERVED IN SUPPLYING THEM WOULD BE THE GENERAL INTERESTS OF COOPERATIVE FRIENDLY

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RELATIONS AND MAINTAINING U.S. INFLUENCE IN NICARAGUA. IF THEY WERE NOT SUPPLIED THOSE INTERESTS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY UNDERMINED. THE GN INTEREST IN US TRAINING THROUGH IMETP FALLS INTO THE SAME CATEGORY. OTHER GON PROCUREMENT INTERESTS WHICH ARE CURRENT, BUT

COULD PERHAPS BE DEFERRED AS LATE AS FY 1979, INCLUDE SMALL JET AIRCRAFT AND V-150 SCOUT CARS. THE GON INTEREST IN THESE PURCHASES IS RELATED TO GENERAL FORCE MODERNIZATION AS WELL AS AN INCREASED CAPABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE INTERNAL CHALLENGE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FSLN. US INTERESTS WHICH WOULD BE AFFECTED BY SUPPLYING THESE ITEMS ARE (1) THE APPEARANCE OF US SUPPORT FOR THE GN WHICH IS THE MAJOR PILLAR OF SUPPORT OF THE CURRENT SOMOZA REGIME. THE IMAGE OF U.S. COMMITMENT TO ITS HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY WOULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED EVEN THOUGH IN FACT WEAPONS DELIVERY COULD BE USED AS AN INDUCEMENT TO IMPROVED HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE. (2) THE ABILITY TO INFLUENCE GN PRACTICES WHICH WOULD BE ENHANCED BY THEIR CONTINUED RELIANCE ON THE US AS ITS MAIN SOURCE OF SUPPLY, AND (3) OUR INTEREST IN LIMITING ARMS PURCHASES. IT IS POSSIBLE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT AN INABILITY OF THE GN TO PURCHASE V-150 SCOUT CARS COULD LEAD TO THEIR PURCHASE OF TANKS FROM OTHER SUPPLIERS.

E. THE PURCHASE OF ANY OR ALL OF THE ABOVE ITEMS WOULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON NICARAGUA'S ECONOMY AND DEBT SERVICE CAPABILITY

HOWEVER, WHAT IMPACT THERE WOULD BE COULD BE AMPLIFIED IF PROCUREMENT WENT TO THIRD COUNTRIES AS EXPLAINED ABOVE AND IN

F. NO USG OR CIVILIAN IN-COUNTRY PERSONNEL OTHER THAN ANTICIPATED PERMANENT MILITARY MISSION STAFFING WOULD BE REQUIRED AS A RESULT OF ANY OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED POTENTIAL PURCHASES OR CONTINUED TRAINING.

G. THE LIKELIHOOD OF THIRD COUNTRY PROCUREMENT OF DEFENSE ARTICLES IS HIGHLY POSSIBLE WITH REGARD TO ALL ITEMS MENTIONED ABOVE. IT COULD BE CONSIDERED A CERTAINTY IF THE GON CAME TO THE CONCLUSION PURCHASE FROM THE US WERE IMPOSSIBLE. ITEMS GON SEEKS TO PURCHASE ARE AVAILABLE FROM OTHER SUPPLIERS ALTHOUGH THERE COULD BE SOME

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ALTERATION SUCH AS SUBSTITUTION OF TANKS FOR ARMORED VEHICLES. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO READY SUBSTITUTE FOR US MILITARY TRAINING. IF US MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WERE ENDED, GON WOULD LIKELY TERMINATE MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH U.S. WHICH GIVES U.S. EXCLUSIVE STATUS IN NICARAGUA. OTHER COUNTRIES (E.G., BRAZIL OR ARGENTINA) MIGHT THEN BE INVITED TO ESTABLISH MILITARY MISSIONS WHICH WOULD INCLUDE TRAINING OFFICERS FOR GN MILITARY ACADEMY.

H. NICARAGUAN PROCUREMENT PRIORITIES REPRESENT NO CHALLENGE TO U.S. INTEREST IN ARMS CONTROL. COMPARABLE AND, IN SOME CASES, SUPERIOR EQUIPMENT IS AVAILABLE IN THE MILITARY OF OTHER REGIONAL COUNTRIES EXCEPT FOR COSTA RICA WHICH HAS NO MILITARY SERVICE.

I. THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT INDICATIONS OF IMPROVEMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES OF THE GN. IF THERE IS FURTHER INDICATION OF IMPROVED HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE AND OTHER POSSIBLE CHANGES IN LOCAL CONDITIONS SUCH AS END OF MARTIAL LAW, DEPT WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER REACTIVATING MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. SECURITY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH NICARAGUA IS SMALL (DOLS 3.1 MILLION FOR FY 1978), BUT HAS MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE TO GON. AS SUCH IT OFFERS SIGNIFICANT LEVERAGE WITH GON IN INFLUENCING HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES. HOWEVER, FOR THAT INFLUENCE TO CONTINUE THE PROGRAM MUST CONTINUE INCLUDING, WHEN APPROPRIATE, MILITARY CONFIDENTIAL

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SALES.

J. PROSPECT FOR GON ABSTINENCE FROM ARMS PURCHASES IS NEGLIBILE. HOWEVER, THE ARMS PURCHASE INTERESTS OF THE GON REPRESENT NO SERIOUS CONCERN FOR THE U.S. EITHER IN TERMS OF VOLUME OR SOPHISTICATION.

K. GON IS AT PRESENT PAYING TRAVEL AND LIVING COSTS FOR GN PERSONNEL RECEIVING U.S. TRAINING. IF IMETP WERE NOT AVAILABLE, GON WOULD PROBABLY PURCHASE TRAINING FROM US BOTH EQUIPMENT-RELATED AND OTHERWISE. LARGE PORTION OF CURRENT GON USAGE OF IMETP IS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. THIS TRAINING IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OVERALL MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WHICH SERVES THOSE US INTERESTS DESCRIBED IN PARA A ABOVE.

5. COMMENT: MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH NICARAGUA HAS
PROPERLY BEEN IDENTIFIED BY DEPT AND US CONGRESS AS KEY ISSUE WITH

REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. EMB ASSUMES HOUSE VOTE TO INCLUDE
NICARAGUA IN SECURITY ASSISTANCE BILL FOR FY 1978 ASSISTANCE
APPROPRIATION WILL BE SUSTAINED BY SENATE. THEREBY ADMINISTRATION
WILL HAVE DESIRED FLEXIBILITY TO USE MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS
LEVERAGE WITH GON ON HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE. EMB BELIEVES FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY TO HAVE MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS IT MUST INCLUDE
POSITIVE INDUCEMENTS OF WEAPONS SALES EVEN THOUGH THAT CREATES US
IMAGE PROBLEMS AS WELL AS NEGATIVE INDUCEMENTS OF SUSPENSION,
DEFERRAL, OR REFUSAL TO SELL SOME ITEMS DEPENDING ON ITEM AND
HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AT THE TIME. IN GENERAL, EMB HAS NO PROBLEM
WITH GENERAL SALES ITEMS INCLUDING STANDARD CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS,
AMMUNITION, SPARE PARTS OR EQUIPMENT PURCHASES INCLUDING RADAR AND
PATROL CRAFT. HOWEVER, THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE LONGER PERIOD OF
APPARENT UNBLEMISHED HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD BEFORE EMB WOULD RECOMMEND
SALE OF ANY MAJOR WEAPONS SYSTEM SUCH AS JET PLANES OR HIGHLY
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VISIBLE ITEMS SUCH AS SCOUT CARS.
RUBENSTEIN

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Message Attributes

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